



STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

State Board of Education Statement on Detroit School Plans

The State Board of Education applauds the aggressive efforts by the Coalition for the Future of Detroit School Children (CFDS), Governor Snyder, and Detroit Mayor Duggan to address the daunting financial and academic challenges facing publically funded Detroit schools. As we have learned with Detroit's municipal bankruptcy, conditions will only worsen by delaying effective intervention and Michigan's children in Detroit will bear the greatest cost. These intervention efforts are not only important in Detroit, but can serve as a template for other communities across the state facing similar challenges.

While the Board strongly supports the Governor's plan to address the Detroit Public Schools' debt, we also believe an educational plan must recognize and effectively address the underlying structural causes of financial instability that has resulted in woefully inadequate classroom funding necessary to address the academic needs of some of Michigan's neediest children.

These structural causes were clearly outlined in the CFDS report, "The Choice is Ours," earlier this year and include: a nearly 40% decline in Detroit's school-aged children between fall 2002 to fall 2013, but without a proportionate decline in the number of schools; growing poverty due to the mass exodus of middle class families from the city leaving Detroit with a 59% child-poverty rate as well as a higher percentage of special education students neither of which are provided adequate educational funding; state policies and a funding system that have created financial uncertainty, an unfair playing field, and little local control over the opening, closing and location of charter schools.

To address these concerns, the Board endorses implementation of the CFDS recommendations outlined in their report, particularly moving to a differentiated funding model based on the actual cost to educate children with differing needs, using a three-year budget projection model rather than unpredictable count-day totals each year, and increasing state funding to eliminate debt accrued under state emergency management. We also support immediately restoring governance of Detroit Public Schools to a Detroit elected school board; and recommend any Commission appointed to ensure quality and transparency among all schools and to make decisions about the opening and closing of schools, has the powers to do this job and is appointed by a Detroit-elected body, such as the Mayor or School Board. We also agree with Mayor Duggan's proposal for universal and comprehensive performance standards that are holistic and not overly reliant on standardized testing.

The Board believes that these improvements on behalf of Michigan's most disadvantaged children will not only elevate the state's overall national ranking in education outcomes, but more importantly, will improve the opportunities and the future for all Michigan citizens.

Adopted June 9, 2015

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